



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service
Blue Ridge Parkway
199 Hemphill Knob Road
Asheville, North Carolina 28803



Section 1-M
Milepost 108-110.5
Station Varies

January 22, 2015

Reference: Morgan Ventures, LLC-RO580
SHPO ID: N/A

Mr. Ben Salter
1340 Patton Avenue
Suite K
Asheville, NC 28806

Dear Mr. Salter:

Park staff has concluded its office and field review of the proposed 195 - foot lattice cellular communications tower proposed by Morgan Ventures in Roanoke County, Virginia. The proposed tower when constructed will be approximately .88 miles from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

On December 18, 2014 Morgan Ventures preformed a balloon test onsite to simulate the potential visibility of the tower by visitors of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The weather was overcast but varying wind conditions throughout the afternoon resulted in balloon heights that could only approximate the exact location and height of the proposed tower. A crane test at this location would have provided a more accurate and exact estimation of the true potential visibility. The sun aspect and air quality also have a dramatic effect on an objects visibility and those conditions which vary by the season and hour cannot be replicated in a simulation of this nature. Consequently some assumptions will need to be made and mitigations followed to assure that construction of the tower will not result in an adverse impact to the Blue Ridge Parkway viewshed.

The proposed tower was visible from several locations where openings in the tree canopy exist. Those locations include along the parkway motor road in the vicinity of the mile marker 109 (.98 miles) and at the entrance to Read Mountain Overlook at mile marker 109.5 (.88 mile). Existing vegetation along the motor road obscured the balloon in other locations where the attached visibility study showed a potential for it to be seen. In several locations where the balloon was visible it did break the ridge line of Read Mountain. If the tower were lowered so as not to be skylined the tower would be subordinate in the landscape even with offset antennas.



In locations where the tower breaks the ridge line of Read Mountain the tower will be skylined between ridges and be more visible than if it had been silhouetted by the land form. This skyline view occurs along the motor road where visitors are traveling at 45 mph and do not have the opportunity to study details of the landscape. The tower would be visible from the Read Mountain Overlook if the existing white pine screen is removed or becomes victim to disease or pests. If a skylined view had been experienced at an overlook where visitors have the opportunity to notice details in the landscape the tower would have had a negative impact on the viewshed.


The proposed tower will not have an adverse impact to the Blue Ridge Parkway viewshed if the following mitigations are followed.

- Proposed tower will be painted or treated to be non-spectral and non-reflective.
- Pole and antennas are of stealth design (antennas will be flush mounted).
- Tower remains unlit.
- All cables are placed inside the tower structure.
- Future collocation cellular providers will also utilize flush mounted antennas.

If the above mitigations are followed we believe that no significant adverse effect to the Blue Ridge Parkway would result from the construction of a new tower as outlined in your zoning submittal of 11/20/2014 we do not require any further environmental assessment or study of alternative sites for our purposes as a property eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, pursuant to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 47CFR Ch. 1, Subpart 1, section 1.1307, part (a) (4).

We appreciate your cooperation and request that you coordinate future tower site project activities with Mr. David Anderson Resident Landscape Architect & GIS/GPS Coordinator at 828/348-3435 or at j_david_anderson@nps.gov.

Sincerely,



J. David Anderson
Resident Landscape Architect

Attachments

cc: BLRI-Ridge Sub District Ranger Steve Buxton- via email
Ben Salter- ECA- ben.salter@eca.com
Ethel Eaton- VA Department of Historic Resources- Ethel.Eaton@dhr.virginia.gov
Chris Novelli- VA Department of Historic Resources- Chris.Novelli@dhr.virginia.gov
Tammi L. Wood - Roanoke County Planning- twood@roanokecountyva.gov
Gerry Sharpe Jr.- gerrysharpejr@gmail.com